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DOORS PAINTED BY PRUD'HON.

DOORS as subjects for decoration have long been deemed worthy of the skill of the best artists. Those of our illustration, which are in the collection of Count H. de Greffulhe, were painted by Prud'hon in the latter part of the last century. The decoration belongs essentially to the style known as the Italian Renaissance, although there are in its composition traces of that exquisite spirit which colored the French work of the period of Louis XVI. Prud'hon painted the doors after he had spent some time in Rome, and it is evident that he had closely studied the decorations in the "Loggia" of Raphael. These are conceived in the same general style, although, on close inspection, we find numerous points of variance. Later in the history of decorative art, under the reign of Louis Philippe of France for instance, we see this same style of ornamentation reappear, but with more violent colors, under the name of "Pompeian." It was used a great deal at Sèvres for the decoration of dinner services, vases, and other articles of porcelain.

The four panels are made to represent in allegory, Tragedy, Comedy, Music and Dancing. These medallions are drawn with a degree of freedom and correctness which recall the style of Clodion. The composition as a whole is extremely well balanced, in perfect harmony, and is as light as it is effective. The study of the details will be found interesting, and suggests many a valuable idea for the art amateur. In the enlarged drawings of the medallions they will, for instance, find excellent designs for plaques or the centre of plates around which an exquisite border could be painted made up of elements taken from the rest of the door. Again, the two-winged female figures holding an escutcheon could be adapted admirably to hold a monogram on the upper rim of a plate. The top of the other panel would serve for the bottom of the plate, and the intermediate band might be filled with laurel wreaths like those at the bottom of the door, although not so thick in the centre, and looped up at proper intervals.

Panels, or saucers, on which subjects similar to those shown in these medallions are painted, can be applied with good effect in numerous ways. They may be mounted in furniture, on boxes, or even framed and hung on the walls as objects of decoration.

HOME UPHOLSTERY.

II.—CHAIR-COVERS.

CHAIR-COVERS, like crumb-cloths, serve two ends—preserve the freshness of new furniture, or conceal the shabbiness of old. In either case they form an important feature of the apartment, and therefore merit a careful selection. For lightness and delicacy, preference is given, in washing fabrics, to tiny-flowered patterns on white and pale gray grounds, or holland and linens corded with scarlet and blue twill. These, however, soil too rapidly for general use, and it is more advisable to choose foliage designs or sprays on dark green, red and blue grounds. The two latter are the most perfectly ingrain. Green, as a rule, turns yellow after the first wash. For easy or wicker chairs, it is usual to make a loose cover or slip, which passes completely over the chair; but smaller ones require merely a covering for the stuffed seat. There are three kinds of loose covers: a sort of chair-shaped bag, an improved substitute for the dusting sheet; the more closely-fitting cover, fastened at the back or side; and a similar one which drops right over and is adjusted by tape strings, the latter being almost exclusively reserved for cane and wicker chairs. The best materials for these

include cretonne, chintz, poplin, linen, drill, holland, crumb-cloth, crash, etc. Occasionally covers are more or less elaborately adorned with embroidery, either in bands, medallions, bouquets, etc., or, in plain linen and holland, ornamented with perpendicular strips of the material, vandyked at the edges, and slashed at intervals down the centre, to thread in and out a bright-colored ribbon. Lining is essential, both for strength and set, except with a particularly stout material; the backings usually employed are, unbleached calico and what is known to upholsterers as longcloth lining.

In venturing upon a loose cover, select, for the first trial, the most straight-backed chair in the house, then

the novice, who will find it safer to take care that the pattern runs in the same direction and the sides match as closely as possible. Inattention to this may ruin an entire cover. Tack the various portions together and try them on the chair, now, with perfect safety, on the wrong side. At the junction of arms and back, gores make a vast improvement; their size and position admit of no rule, as they vary in every chair; judgment alone can guide the worker. When the cover fits satisfactorily, stitch the seams strongly and overcast each with white cotton. Leave open, as preferred, either the central back seam from top to ground, or the right side seam from the seat, the latter being the least conspic-

uous place. In either case, the mode of finishing is the same. On the under edge run a two-inch strip to match, turn it over and fell down on the stitches; this then projects one inch and forms a foundation for the button-holes. Finish the overlapping edge, make a false hem, and sew buttons on the wrong side of it, taking care not to let the stitches through. By such a plan the button slips into the button-hole first as a hook into an eyelet hole. In a circular chair the sweep causes the outer back to set like a balloon. Rectify the fulness by taking in side and central plaits till the material lies smoothly. The curved outline, however, makes it rather difficult to manage this without a stretched and rather poor appearance at the lower edge; hence it is far more satisfactory to add a flounce, which will take up eight or ten inches of the height of the chair, and is to be calculated for in the first measurement. Cut off strips of the right depth, widthways from the stuff, allowing one third of the exact size extra for fulness. Join up the selvedge seams, and gather the frill and set it into the chair-cover by a narrow cording. The flounce should be rather scanty at the back and sides, especially when marked by a decided pattern; plain colors always admit most fulness. When the cover is ready for slipping over, great is the beginner's disappointment that the fit is not at once perfection. Hollow places "ride up," as upholsterers say, and suggest the real method for wickerwork and cane chairs, of keeping covers in place, sewing tape strings at every necessary spot, and tying down underneath through the cane, etc. This accomplishes the desired result.

Sofa-covers, though of larger proportions, follow the foregoing rules. They include also the squab, pillow, and sometimes bolster cases. The squab case is simple enough to cut out, but requires particular neatness of execution in order that the joining of the breadths may leave no ugly line. The arrangement of the pattern, too, is all-important; it should match so exactly that each strip or trail on the valance meets unbrokenly the corresponding one on the border, and continues thence on the upper side of the squab and sofa back. One side of the squab case is left open to admit the squab, and afterward neatly felled, tied or buttoned. For the latter, turn down a broad hem on the overlapping side, run a strip on the under side, and place the buttons and button-holes, as already explained, in chair-covers. Squab cases, alike on both sides, can be turned when

soiled, or else, if short of stuff, unbleached calico serves equally well underneath. In pillow-cases, from twenty-five inches to twenty-seven inches square is a medium size; the top piece must be two or three inches wider than the lower one to pass easily over the raised surface, and keep the side selvedge seams well out of sight. The buttoning matches that of the squab case. Embroidered or Berlin wool-work pillows differ only in being stitched, instead of buttoned, on the fourth side, and they have a backing of another material generally harmonizing with the ground. For this, merino, cashmere, and coburg are most appropriate; silk and satin should be avoided as so apt to slide and get out of



DOOR-PANELS PAINTED BY PRUD'HON.

(IN THE COLLECTION OF COUNT H. DE GREFFULHE.)

measure separately for the back, sides, seat and front, calculating, according to the width of the stuff, how many yards are required. Here shrewd reckoning serves for the experience which guesses the quantity almost at a glance, and the correct, even though unpractised, worker can attain not only a good but a close fit. The next thing is to take the pattern. Many workers merely tear off the right length, with turnings of the several portions of the chair, and shape and pin them on the article itself. Some, for less trouble, do this on the wrong side of the fabric, and others, on account of the pattern, on the right, turning the pins. Such a plan, though expeditious, is scarcely feasible for

place. Nothing looks more charming with these ornamental pillows than slips of spotted muslin, edged with a dainty lace or frilling, and left open at each corner to display a trefoil or tassel. For bolster cases cut the material to correspond with the arms, and not the squab; then finish the ends, either as in the horsehair ones—i.e., gathered into the centre, and completed by a covered mould or tassel, or by stitching in a flat circular piece. Leave the seam open to slip in the bolster, and secure by felling or buttoning, the first being more usual.

Seat-coverings take on the average about three quarters of a yard of thirty-six inch material. Procure an

NEW MATERIALS FOR ART NEEDLEWORK.

ARRASENE, a material especially adapted for bold and rich ornamentation in art needlework for upholstery, has become popular in England, but it has not yet made its appearance in this country. There is not even a sample of it at the rooms of our enterprising Decorative Art Society, which generally has every thing even in the way of embroidery materials; and the proprietors of the Broadway fancy goods stores have not yet heard of it. The London Furniture Gazette says: "Although composed of wool, its thread possesses a tendency—due to its peculiar formation—to expand as

much as possible from its centre or core; so much so, indeed, that four strands of arrasene will occupy as much room as a dozen of crewel-work. Its irregularity also serves to imitate with great exactness the inequality invariably preserved in nature, whether in the bark of twigs or in effects of foliage generally. Again, its very construction causes the threads to mingle with each other in a manner unattainable with wool; a much greater diversity of shade is thus produced than would be the case in a more compact form of thread. The effect, therefore, is totally new, and quite unlike that of crewel-work. The material has a bold and rich appearance, and is eminently applicable to such materials as crash, serge, silk, satin, etc.

"There are two methods of working arrasene; it may be stitched through the fabric of the groundwork, or it may be sewn on to its surface only. The former method is found more suitable for canvas or other loose material, and the latter for velvet or cloth. In either

case its peculiar property of expansion is preserved, and an equally rich effect is the result. For heightening the colors at points where high light may be required, a silk arrasene is also manufactured by the inventors. In respect to price, the finished arrasene would about equal that of crewel-work, since, although the material is more expensive than wool, weight for weight, only one third of the labor and material is required which would be necessary to execute an equal quantity of crewel-work."

Another excellent new English material for art needlework is known as oatmeal cloth. It is very rich

and soft in texture, and its surface bears a sort of whimsical resemblance to boiled oatmeal. The only specimen we have seen is a small sample at the Decorative Art Society Rooms, which an American lady recently brought from England. Our manufacturers have imitated quite successfully the momie cloth; but we think they will not find it so easy to copy the oatmeal cloth and the arrasene.

WE have received several designs for plaques or plates, the most praiseworthy being sent us by Minnie Woodward, of San Francisco. We hope to make use of some of these in a future number. In cases where the designs are unavailable, we cannot undertake to return them, unless stamps are sent us to defray the postage.

AT SYPHER'S.—Among the curious articles exhibited by Sypher, is a mechanical organ, once the property of the Empress Josephine. It is of inlaid mahogany, mounted in fire-gilt, and plays forty-eight tunes. A Venetian trousseau coffer, 200 years old,

is such as may have been used by the bride in playful hiding when the spring-lock fastened her in, to be the theme of a poet's song. It is of wood, painted black, and decorated in fanciful designs. In historical china there is a crested decorated Spode dinner set of 200 pieces, which belonged to Lord Lytton; and a white and gold dinner set used by the first Napoleon at Saint Cloud. A rare Gobelin tapestry, 200 years old, representing Martin Luther and Satan, is as bright in coloring as when manufactured. A musical hall clock, 200 years old, rivals the famous clocks of Mr. George W. Childs, of Philadelphia. A carved Dutch cabinet, 200 years of age, is a marvel of elaborate designs, the whole front bearing representations of birds, flowers and leaves. A low chest-like bureau, inlaid, of the time of Louis XIV., is very curious. There is some rare and costly Sèvres china, and statuary by Larkin G. Meade notably the

group of three figures representing Queen Isabella, Columbus and a courtier, of the purest white marble, and valued at \$2000. Of this collection the most interesting feature to many persons would be the death masque of the first Napoleon, taken by his Italian physician, Dr. Araommaichi, at the Island of St. Helena, a fac-simile of the original masque in Prince Napoleon's cabinet.

AT T. B. STEWART & CO.'s warerooms in West Twenty-third Street we noticed, during a recent visit, some carved wood mantels and tops, inlaid with tiles, so artistically constructed and in such thorough accord with the improved taste of the day in interior decoration, that it is with pleasure we recall a few of them for the information of our readers. One is of ebonized cherry wood, with a square mirror in a carved frame, with



"TRAGEDY." DECORATION FOR A PANEL.

exact pattern of the shape, chalk it, and cut it out on the chintz, silk or damask with quarter-inch turnings. Measure off a border, which, with a narrow hem, shall reach just to the edge of the woodwork frame. Stitch to the seat with or without cording, nick out for the back legs, and take the slits. Curve out spaces for the front legs, and fasten the cover to the chair by strings tied underneath at the legs. In another plan the border projects an inch beyond the chair frame, and a tape, run through the hem, is tied round one of the back legs. Sometimes a fancy chair will display, at the back, a kind of stuffed medallion in needlework, velvet,



"MUSIC." DECORATION FOR A PANEL.

silk, etc. A handy mode of covering this is to cut out a round in chintz, etc., rather wider than the ornament in circumference, and through the hem insert a tape. Trim the edge with a goffered ruching, place the chintz over the medallion, draw up the tape and conceal the tie by a bow or rosette. For convenience the chintz is often merely tacked beneath the ruching. The same plan is adopted for elbow coverings.

A PATENT "glazed terra-cotta" comes from England. It can be cleaned even by the rain, can be colored, and is permanent and capable of being removed, say, by a tenant at the end of his leave.



"COMEDY." DECORATION FOR A PANEL.

miniature projecting portico and pillars on either side of the shelf, constructed to hold bric-à-brac. The fireplace has a brass octagon frame, plain iron back stamped to imitate tiles, a grate body on wheels, and nickel-plated front. The face is inlaid with blue and white Minton pictorial tiles, each separated by a black strip. The back hearth is of plain black, red, and light drab Minton tiles. The front hearth is of a pretty geometrical design in yellow ochre, white and ashes-of-roses, picked out with black enough to harmonize with the black of the mantel and top. Another mantel and top are of butternut wood, with panels carved in cherry, and the grate jambs are of the same materials. The iron tile back is of fleur-de-lis pattern, nickel-plated, and has the appearance of being perforated. The frame is octagon, nickel-plated. The grate jambs are of buff,



"DANCE." DECORATION FOR A PANEL.

black and red Minton tiles. The nickel-plated grate is square and of picket design. The back hearth is of blue and white Minton tiles, and the front hearth is of Godwin tiles in olive, white, sage-green, and buff. Massive brass andirons and low fender show off very handsomely this tastefully contrived mantel. There is also a noticeable mahogany mantel and top with a mirror, with the novel addition of a bric-à-brac frame under the shelf, with two columns supporting the shelf with brackets from the pilasters. The panels are veneered, giving a pleasant relief to the prevailing dead surface of the mantel. The jambs are of alternate solid black and colored tiles. There is an octagon brass frame, and tile back of fleur-de-lis pattern. The hearth is of Minton tiles, in black and light drab checks, with seven colored tiles arranged in the centre to match the colored tiles of the jambs.